

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street, Suite 7
Easton, MD 21601
September 20, 2023

Present:

Board

Susan MacKinnon, President (D)
Walter Black (D)
Barbara H. Perry (D)
Denise Lovelady (R)

Staff

Tammy Stafford, Talbot County Election Director

Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan

Public

Terrence Bernard
Gary Judy
Mark Harrison

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held September 20, 2023 in the meeting room at the rear entrance of Suite 7 at the Board office indicated above. Ms. MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. MacKinnon asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of August 19, 2023 and the special meeting on August 25, 2023, copies of which board members had. Ms. Lovelady asked that clarification be added to the August 19 minutes to her comment about the visit by Mr. Jared DeMarinis to the Board of Elections reflect her support of his visit. Ms. Stafford asked that a note be added at the Election Director's Report that a copy of that report is attached. These amendments were discussed and Mr. Black moved that both minutes be accepted, with amendments as noted. Ms. Lovelady seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Additions/Changes to Agenda

Ms. MacKinnon asked to add item "D" to the agenda to reflect the handing out of MS-22 material that the Board will discuss at the October meeting. Ms. Lovelady moved that the agenda be approved as amended. Mr. Black seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Mr. Bernard asked that copies of the agenda be made available for the public to have at subsequent meetings of the Board. Ms. Stafford said she would do that. Misterys Bernard, Judy and Harrison, representing the Voter Integrity Group of Maryland, Talbot County Affiliates, provided the Board members with copies of their previous request for ballot information which they stated had not been fulfilled.(Copy of their request is attached). They are seeking information from both the 2020 and 2022 elections. Mr. Harrison said they did not want a link, which they had been given, but want our Board to respond. Ms. Ryan said if they had a problem with the link that we can print out the information but that our response letter will indicate how many records will need to be printed, the cost for printing those records and the staff's time and cost to complete the request. Ms. Ryan and Ms. Stafford will work on this to meet the 10-day response time or a letter will be sent indicating more time is needed since some of the information may have to come from the State Board of Elections. Ms. MacKinnon confirmed that the Board is requesting that Ms. Ryan and Ms. Stafford prepare the response for the Board.

Mr. Bernard asked about Ms. Stafford not having her laptop at this meeting. It was explained that the Zoom link for attendance not in person was primarily used during COVID in addition, Ms. Stafford explained that they are still working on having consistent WiFi in the new, temporary location.

Election Director's Report

- Director's Report provided to the Board is attached.

Notice of Distribution of Materials:

- Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members September 12, 2023.
- Agenda for the September meeting was posted on the BOE office door, in the entrance of the building and to the website September 12, 2023.

Personnel :

- Effective September 7, 2023, Katherine Berry is the new Deputy State Administrator for the Maryland State Board of Elections. She visited the Talbot office last week.

Meetings Attended:

- **Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) meeting September 15, 2023 in Frederick County.** – Both Katherine Berry and Jared DeMarinis, spoke at this meeting.

Correspondence:

- Copies of Public Information Act Requests to the Talbot County Board of Elections were provided to Board members as requested at the August meeting. Responses have been sent for all requests.

Voter Registration Activities:

- Monthly statistical report, which was distributed to Board Members, has as of August 31, 2023, that there were 28,744 active registered voters, 1438 inactive voters, for a total voter count of 30,182 in Talbot County.

Voting System Activities:

- New poll books are in a No-Go status due to software issues. We will use the current pollbooks for the 2024 election.

Candidate Filing:

- Candidate filing is open with a deadline to file of February 9, 2024, at 9 p.m. No candidates have filed at this time.
- Local offices on the ballot are Board of Education Districts 2, 5, 6.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

- **2024 Polling Place Agreements** – Ms. Stafford has received eight of the eleven polling place agreements back. She will reach out to Trappe, Cordova and Easton Fire Hall for the Election Day agreements. The Early Voting agreement has been received.
- **Election Judge Recruitment** – Election Judge numbers as of September 12, 2023 are 102 committed and 33 needed to fill 135 election judge positions. Need to recruit a bit above the need to have substitutes available for any unforeseen cancelations. Of those committed, there are 62 Democrats, 30 Republican and 10 Unaffiliated/Other.
 - Ms. Lovelady asked about Ms. Stafford's time with the Board of Elections. Ms. Stafford has assisted in both the 2020 and 2022 elections. It was asked if there has always been this party affiliation imbalance and she said yes. Ms. MacKinnon said that the Board had discussed in the past about trying to have judges at polling places closest to their homes and as much as possible have experienced judges in all polling places. They try to use experienced judges as

chief judges. Ms. Stafford said that in 2022 they did their best to take proximity into account.

- Ms. Stafford provided the Board with a copy of the Election Judge Interest Form. Ms. Perry asked beyond this form is there any kind of vetting to determine the fitness to be an Election Judge and if, to Ms. Stafford's knowledge, had any judge ever been removed from being a judge for any reason. Ms. Stafford did not know of anyone being removed as an Election Judge. Ms. Stafford said that during the Election Judge training they try to determine who will best fit into which positions but no other screening is done.
- Ms. Stafford has spoken to Senator Mautz and to the Mr. Osborne of the Talbot County Republican Central Committee (TCRCC) to express the need for Republican judges. Ms. Lovelady asked if a group from the TCRCC was going to be trained to do voter registration and that would be a good group to ask to be Election Judges. Ms. Stafford said she had been in contact with Mr. Osborne and that he will work on it.
- A lengthy discussion among the Board members about why there is such a disparity between the parties to become election judges. Ms. Lovelady asked if it had always been this way and Ms. MacKinnon indicated that as long as she has been on the Board it has but she didn't think it had been this wide a gap as there is now. Ms. Lovelady said the partisan groups need to help out but right now there is no Republican Women's Club or a Republican Club, to her knowledge. There is a Young Republicans Club and maybe Mr. Osborne might know who to would be their contact. Ms. Stafford has reached out to other groups asking them to put a blurb in their newsletters about the need for Election Judges. Ms. MacKinnon asked about contacting Chesapeake College which Ms. Stafford said could be looked into but the College deals with multiple counties so it could be difficult to just reach Talbot County residents without confusion about who could apply. Ms. Lovelady asked if there was a cutoff date for recruiting. Ms. Stafford would like all to be recruited by the end of December but there is no hard cutoff. She wants to have training in December but if more sign up late, she will do training as needed.
- Ms. MacKinnon said there are High School classes that might be approached about recruiting students to be Election Judges and Ms. Stafford said that outreach had been done before COVID. Ms. Perry asked if Ms. Stafford knew if any students had signed up since when

Ms. Perry did a voter registration in the spring, at least two students took information and seemed interested especially since they get paid to be an Election Judge. Ms. Stafford said she did not know, off hand, if any had signed up.

- Ms. Stafford has designed a trifold hand out to give to interested persons about being and Election Judge. Copies were given to the Board.
- Ms. Stafford is planning on having some kind of event in December for the Election Judges.

Other Projects:

- **Voter Outreach** – Staff will be attending the Talbot County Community Resource Expo Saturday, October 14, 2023, 10 am – 1 pm. The event is being held at the Easton Elementary School. Ms. Stafford hopes to have security measures in place that will allow them to demonstrate voting equipment at this event.
- **Office Location Move** – The relocation of the election equipment took place August 31, 2023. Local board staff, State Board Staff and County staff were on hand for the move. The election equipment area is still being organized.
 - Ms. Stafford is planning an Open House for Wednesday, October 18, 2023, from 4:00 – 7:00 pm for the community to meet the election team and to tour the office. Posters announcing this were given to the Board. Personal invitations will be extended to the County Council, State Board of Elections Administrator and Deputy, and to other dignitaries in the community and state and local government.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- Biennial Meeting of Maryland Election Officials – The meeting will be held Thursday, October 19, 2023 at the Doubletree Hotel in Annapolis. A draft agenda was provided to the Board. Ms. Stafford has registered all of us and her staff for this meeting. She requested that the office be closed that day since the entire staff must attend.

Board Attorney's Report – Ms. Ryan had nothing to report.

Old Business

A. Facility for Election Office –

- All future meeting of the Board will be in this room at this temporary facility. This space has more office space and better for chain of custody. Downfall is that early voting cannot be done here since this meeting area is less than 2000 sq. feet and the Easton Fire Hall is 4000 sq. feet. In addition, this is not ADA compliant. Talbot County has a large turnout for early voting and the fact that this location also houses other offices, the parking would be very limited. Another drawback is that the Election Equipment area has a smaller work area but the storage area is better.
 - Ms. Lovelady asked if Ms. Stafford will be able to design the space as needed at the Cadmus location which is still being reviewed or whatever permanent location is decided upon by the county. Ms. Stafford said she can and that she needs 11,000 sq. feet as a minimum but maybe more to allow for population growth in our county.
 - Ms. MacKinnon asked Ms. Stafford if all security concerns had been resolved and Ms. Stafford indicated they had. Any other security issues will be addressed in the next budget cycle.

B. By-Laws – Still awaiting response back from the State Board so the By-Laws will be on hold until the October meeting.

New Business

A. Board Membership

- Mr. Secrist has submitted his letter of resignation due to health issues effective September 13, 2023. Ms. MacKinnon asked Ms. Ryan if we needed to nominate a new Vice President now, and she said we do. Ms. Perry nominated Ms. Lovelady and Mr. Black seconded. The vote was unanimous. Ms. Perry asked how long Mr. Secrist had been on the Board and if any kind of commendation is ever given for someone's service. Ms. Ryan said she knows of other organizations that give proclamations to people for their service. Ms. MacKinnon asked if someone could take the initiative to contact Senator Mautz for such a proclamation and Ms. Lovelady said she would. His exact time on the Board will be verified since Ms. Lovelady said he had been on the board since 2009 but Mr. Black thought it was longer. Ms. Stafford will also extend an invitation for Mr. Secrist to attend the Open House on October 18.

- Ms. Perry asked if the Board needs to take any action to fill the position on the Board. Ms. Stafford and Ms. Ryan said that no action is needed that the Governor will select a person from a list that will be provided to him by the Talbot County Republican Central Committee and that person will then serve on the board in a temporary status until they are confirmed by the Senate in the 2024 session.

B. Contributions

Ms. MacKinnon submitted to the board letters from Ms. Perry and Ms. Lovelady advising the Board of political contributions that they have made. Ms. MacKinnon said that political donation notifications will be on file.

C. Distribution of MS-22

- There are three forms, one of which is an example from another Board. Board members should review all forms and be ready to write the job description at the next meeting since it will be on the agenda. This can be done in an open meeting unless specific personnel are discussed, then the Board would need to go into a closed meeting.

Confirmation of next meeting

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Board of Elections will be on October 18, 2023 at 9:30 am.

No Closed Session was needed.

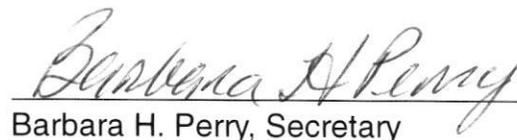
Adjournment

Mr. Black moved to adjourn; it was seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:57 am.

Attested,


Susan MacKinnon

Respectfully submitted,


Barbara H. Perry, Secretary

TALBOT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 18, 2023

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members October 10, 2023.

The Agenda for the September meeting was posted on the Board of Elections office door and in the entrance of the building, as well as, to the website October 10, 2023.

Personnel: Nothing to report at this time.

Meetings Attended:

Talbot County Council Meeting, September 26, 2023 - I requested a proclamation from the for National Voter Education Week. The proclamation was voted down 3-2. Mr. Stepp commented that he could not support the proclamation because of his findings that the founding organization was partisan.

Talbot County Council Meeting, October 10, 2023- The Talbot County Council presented the Board of Elections with a proclamation for the Elections Open House and Voter Information.

Correspondence:

A response to the request for information from the Maryland Voter Integrity group, Talbot Chapter has been sent. I also reviewed the comments from the September 20 meeting.

Voter Registration Activities:

Monthly Statistical Report- The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of September 30, 2023 there were 28, 726 active registered voters in Talbot County and 1,498 Inactive voters, for a total voter count of 30, 224.

Voting System Activities:

Pollbooks- We have 66 total; 65 are functional. The second charging is completed and the pollbooks have been set back to the most current software level.

Candidate Filing:

Candidate filing is open. The deadline to file for candidacy is February 9, 2024 at 9 p.m. The local offices on the ballot are Board of Education Districts 2, 5, 6. No one has filed at this time.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

Election Judge Recruitment- Election Judge numbers as of October 10, 2023 are 110 committed. Of those committed, there are 65 Democratic; 32 Republican; and 11

Unaffiliated/Other. Our goal is 135, however, we will continue to take applications even after our goal is met.

Budget:

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY 2024 as of September 11, 2023 were included in the Board's packets.

Other projects:

Voter Outreach- Staff will be attended The Talbot County Community Resource Expo, Saturday, October 14, 2023, 10 am to 1 pm. The event is being held at Easton Elementary School.

Open House: Wednesday, October 18, 2023, from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

Biennial Meeting of Maryland Election Officials- The meeting will be held Thursday, October 19, 2023 at the Doubletree Hotel in Annapolis.

The office will be closed for staff to attend.